

WAR

BY

LAWRENCE H. HASKIN, JR.

Submitted in partial fulfillment of pledge duties prior to  
initiation into the Maryland Beta Chapter of Tau Beta Pi at  
the University of Maryland, November 29, 1940.



## WAR

War is said to be that state in which a nation prosecutes its right by force. <sup>(1)</sup> The general impression is that war springs from the natural belligerency of human nature or from the animosity of peoples or from the ambitions of leaders who accidentally happen in history. <sup>(2)</sup> This impression is not wholly justified; because as the history of civilization is studied, it is found that as civilization progressed, so did warfare. Civilization and wars seem to work hand in hand. There is no reason to believe that wars in the future will not progress along with the future civilizations instead of being discontinued in favor of the "world peace" or "good neighbor" ideas that so many people dream about.

Since the beginning of recorded history, there have been wars. All of them, no matter what the apparent motive, have underlying, essentially the same motives: plunder and tribute.

The life of the primitive man was one of continual warfare. Plunder was undoubtedly the great motive. If a neighboring tribe had something one tribe desired, there probably appeared only one way in which to gain it. That way was to drive away the person or persons who possessed the thing desired or by some other means force them to give it up.

(1) Websters Unabridged Dictionary.

(2) Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. XV.  
The Macmillan Co., New York, 1935.



From the time when people started to accumulate wealth in any form, such as flocks, herds, or stores of goods, robber bands were formed to take advantage of the accumulation and rob the owners. This act was one of the earliest forms of war. Proof of this fact is established in observing that the early centers culture were situated in sheltered and easily defended spots. This type of war, the strictly plunder type, was in effect up to comparatively recent times. It reached its highest point of development in the invasion of Europe by the Huns, and the campaigns of Genghis Khan in Eastern and Southern Asia.

The so called religious wars in Europe were not really religious wars at all. For example, the Thirty-Years War was, at its outset, apparently a religious war, but commercial motives were so dominating that, for the greater part of the war, Catholic France supported the Protestant party and the Protestant Swedes fought against Protestant Denmark.

Wars fought for development of industry and trade have in their motives elements of both plunder and tribute. Weak nations are merely forced to serve the strong nation. If the weak nation becomes strong enough over a period of time to carry on war against the strong nation they are serving, we have a war which is most justified; war for independence.

The most recent excuse for war is that it becomes necessary for expansion on the part of increasing population. This condition as a motive for war is not justified. Early in history there was no great overpopulation, yet wars were very frequent. At the beginning of the World War, the population of Western Europe was declining rapidly. At present, the most thickly



populated sections in the world, India and China, do not find it necessary to carry on war for purposes of expansion.

The last frequently used excuse for war, an excuse to cover up the real motives of plunder and tribute, is hatred between races, classes, or cultures. Hatred between nations never has been and probably never will be a dominating motive for war.

As long as man inhabits the earth and retains his senses, there will be wars. This conclusion is based on the fact that the great majority of human beings in the world want things that other human beings have. The last resort in fulfilling these desires is war. General Carl von Clausewitz said in one of his volumes that war is only a continuance of policy by other means.<sup>(3)</sup> This statement merely says that if you can't get what you want by peaceful methods, go to war and take it. General Clausewitz's three volumes, "On War," are known as the Bible of the German officer and the German statesman.

(3) Pilcher, T.D., War According To Clausewitz p 2.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Webster's Unabridged Dictionary.

Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences  
New York: The Macmillan Company.  
1935.

Pilcher, T.D.  
WAR ACCORDING TO CLAUSEWITZ.  
New York: Cassell and Company, Ltd.  
1918.